DOCUMENT RESUME

SP 002 325

ED 028 130

By-Adams, Raymond S.

Teachers and Their Social Relationships.

Pub Date [Feb 69]

Note-27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Assn., Los Angeles, California, February 5-8, 1969.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.45

Descriptors-Parents, Principals, Questionnaires, *Role Perception, School Personnel, *Social Relations, Surveys, Teacher Attitudes, *Teacher Behavior, *Teacher Role, *Teachers

Identifiers-Australia, England, New Zealand, United States

A study examined (1) how teachers in England. Australia, New Zealand, and the United States think others expect them to behave and (2) the amount of divergence existing between these expectations and the teacher's own attitudes. A teacher-questionnaire listed 10 teacher activities (derived from an interview phase of the study) representing behavior that the teachers themselves thought to be important in their social relations: attending PTA meetings regularly, accepting nonprofessional duties willingly, maintaining orderliness and quietness in the classroom, encompassing a broad range of educational goals, using corporal punishment, using free periods only for professional matters, adhering strictly to a prescribed curriculum, giving voice publicly on controversial topics, having an occasional drink at a local pub or bar, preparing pupils to "get ahead" in life. Respondents indicated their level of approval of each item and then indicated the degree of approval "perceived" in each of the four "significant other" groups (other teachers, principals, educational orricials, and parents). Responses were converted to scale scores on a five-point scale and mean responses calculated by country. (Findings are presented in graph form, and conclusions are listed for each item and for the total study.) (JS)

ED028120

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Teachers and Their Social Relationships

Raymond S. Adams
University of Missouri at Columbia

A.E.R.A. 1969

Despite its enticing title, this section of the presentation is not the educational equivalent of the Masters and Johnson study nor even the The Kinsey Report. Rather it is concerned with two less dramatic but nevertheless intriguing issues viz. (a) how teachers think others expect them to behave and (b) the amount of divergence existing between these expectations and the teacher's own attitudes.

This part of the study then has affinity with conventional role theory. Terms like, role expectations, significant other and conflict are therefore to be anticipated. Also to be anticipated is that these mystique or cult terms carry meanings that are just sufficiently different from everyday usage to be disconcerting. Consequently, it is necessary at the outset to establish some operational definitions. The best way to do so is by outlining--briefly--the initial rationalization that underlay this part of the study and as well the sources of the data.

When the project was conceptionalized teachers were seen as role incumbents. They occupied and played their roles in disconcernable behavior settings such as the classroom, the school, the community etc. In the process they came into contact with a number of "significant others" whose own roles impinged on the teachers'. These significant others included; school officials, principals, other teachers and parents. There are many others of course, but we confined our attention to these four. These

SP003305

significant others were thought to hold expectations about teacher behavior--particularly normative expectations about how teachers should behave. So, it was anticipated that the teachers would have their own perceptions of the norm expectations that their significant others held.

Consequently, we designed part of the questionnaire to map these perceptions. The teacher activities selected for attention were derived from the interview phase of the study and represented behavior that the teachers themselves thought to be important in their social relationships with administrators, parents and other teachers. They are listed below. (Table 1)

1. Attending P.T.A. meetings regularly
2. Accepting non-professional duties willingly
3. Maintaining orderliness and quietness in the classroom
4. Encompassing a broad range of educational goals
5. Using corporal punishment
6. Using free periods only for professional matters
7. Adhering strictly to a prescribed curriculum
8. Giving voice publically on controversial topics
9. Having an occasional drink at a local pub or bar
10. Preparing pupils to "get ahead" in life

In the questionnaire, each activity was presented separately and the respondent was asked first, to indicate his own level of approval (by choosing one of five alternatives ranging from "strongly approve" through "strongly disapprove" (Table 2)) and second, to indicate the degree of approval he "perceived" in the four significant others. The responses were converted to scale scores on five point scales. Mean responses were calculated for a variety of sample sub groups (e.g. by country, by sex of teacher, etc.).

The mean scale scores for each respondent set and for each set of significant others could therefore be located somewhere on a highly approve, highly disapprove continuum.

The design of the study and the procedures used permitted a number of conclusions to be drawn about teachers' perceptions. The ones that will be dealt with here are:

(a) the degree of approval or disapproval reported by the respondents themselves.

(b) the relative positions of significant others.

(c) convergence and divergence between positions.

Before the findings can be discussed several points must be made. Unlike the data from the teaching practice questions, there was no evidence in the role questions of a consistent pattern of response bias. In other words while the countries did appear to vary on the amount of "emphasis" they had available to distribute, they were somewhat more homogeneous on the amount of approval or disapproval they were prepared to bestow. As a result, there seems to be no apparent reason for not treating the scale points as absolute. Consequently, we can assume that when the mean responses of teachers from one country are located more towards the approval end of the continuum than the responses from another country's teachers, then the first set of teachers does approve more. By accepting this position we are thus able for instance, to point to the greater virtue of American teachers who, on the average, favor having an occasional drink less than do the teachers in the other countries.

One further qualification needs to be made also. Because of the size of the sample, very small scale point differences turned out to be

statistically significant. It should be kept in mind that statistical significance then may not reflect "real" difference.

We turn now to the findings. Figure 1 is concerned with attendance at P.T.A. meetings. In Figure 1 the mean scores for the teachers and their perceptions of the positions taken by the four significant others, are presented for each of the four countries. The figure shows four lines of five boxes each constituting a national set--England top, Australia next, New Zealand next and U.S.A. last. The boxes are shaded to indicate respondents and significant others. The respondent boxes are shaded with horizontal lines, other teacher boxes with vertical lines, parents with down slanted oblique lines, principals with up slanted oblique lines and education official boxes have been left blank. Beneath each set of boxes appears a line which is <u>part</u> of the five point scale continuum. At the left extremity is 2.2, at the right 4.4. Two extended marks in between indicate where 3.0 and 4.0 fall respectively. It should be remembered that because most of the lower half of the scale is missing (it was not used), the actual mid point of the scale is at 3.0. On the full scale a strongly disapprove response would score 1, disapprove 2, neutral feeling 3, approve 4 and strongly approve 5. The small arrow-heads indicate the location of each reference group on the scale. They are placed in the order represented by the boxes. Let us take the American sample first, there are a number of things to note:

(1) The scale scores range from 3.13 to 4.36 which yields a spread of 1.23 scale points.

(2) All of the responses are located above the scale median (3) so no one apparently disapproves of the teachers' attending P.T.A. regularly.

(3) In the respondents' eyes, nearly all the non-teachers approve of the teachers' attending P.T.A. meetings more than do the (relatively less enthusiastic) teachers themselves. (N.Z. is the exception)

(4) Nonetheless, the respondents, perhaps from guilt feelings, adopt a "holier than thou" attitude towards other teachers who, they see, as less willing to attend P.T.A. meetings than they themselves are.

(5) The greatest disparity demonstrated in these responses is to be found between other teachers and Educational Officials. If the perceptions are accurate (which cannot be assumed), on this point teachers and educational officials are likely to be at odds with each other.

(6) The teacher respondents diverge least of all from the position they see parents taking and most from the position they think the Educational Officials take. Apparently they do not see quite eye to eye with the principal either.

There are certain points of difference, and some similarities worth noting when the American data are contrasted with the data from the other countries.

(1) The scale point spread is less in the other countries. In other words the respondents there see the significant others as more like-minded.

(2) In all cases the respondents themselves (piously) approve P.T.A. attendance more than they think their professional peers do.

(3) Always the administrators are seen to approve most.

(4) Always the other teachers are thought of as approving least.

(5) No one ever is reported as disapproving.

(6) The perceived positions of the significant others relative to each other is amost identical for all countries. The one exception is in N.Z. To the respondents, New Zealand parents apparently approve of the teachers' attendance of P.T.A. meetings less than do the respondents themselves.

Time will not permit a full explanation of all the features of the responses to this item, nor can each of the remaining items be treated in so much detail. Instead, as each figure is produced some of the more salient characteristics will be pointed out. The next item (Figure 2) is concerned with <u>willing acceptance of non-professional duties, e.g., lunchroom supervision, club work, etc</u>.

(1) The respondents in all of the countries apparently see no reason to be wildly enthusiastic about this task. All fall within the neutral range.

(2) Other teachers were seen as less enthusiastic and in two cases--England and U.S.A.--even disapproving.

(3) All respondents also agreed that non-teachers expected more of the teachers than they were prepared to approve of themselves.

(4) Only minor differences were exhibited between the countries. England and the U.S.A. saw principals approving less (but not much less) than school officials. The reverse was true in Australia.

(5) The overall scale spread between the least approving and most approving was greatest for this item--1.67 scale points.

The next item is concerned with consistently maintaining orderliness and quiet in the classroom. (Figure 3)

(1) The four response sets demonstrate considerable within country unanimity. Less than half a scale point separates the highest and lowest mean in each case.

(2) The small spread suggests that differences must be regarded with caution but it is noticeable that in each case other teachers are seen to approve of consistent orderliness and quiet more than are the respondents themselves. Given the pious bias of the respondents in the earlier questions presumably this implies that the other teachers are "lax" rather than "progressive."

(3) If the national average can serve as an index, the society that appreciates orderliness and quiet most (or is most authoritarian) is Australia. The United States is second, New Zealand is third and England fourth.

The next item (Figure 4) asked about Emphasis on a broad range of educational goals (i.e., teaching the whole child).

If we can assume that the greater the amount of approval respondents give to an activity, the greater their conviction that the activity is virtuous, this item is the best index of virtue.

(1) In all cases teachers attributed the greatest amount of approval to themselves. Furthermore, the amount of approval attributed was greater than in any other instance.

(2) This time other teachers are not the villains (or the scapegoats). While they are appreciably less approving (less virtuous)

than the respondents themselves (approximately half a scale point away in every case) they do at least approve more than the parents do.

(3) In all cases teachers attributed the least amount of approval to parents who presumably then, were least virtuous or least intelligent, in the eyes of the teacher.

(4) The mean level of approval for each national group was remarkably similar (4.28, 4.32, 4.33, 4.42).

Item 29, the next one, was concerned with <u>usage of corporal punishment for the control of difficult pupils</u>. (Figure 5)

Here the answers tended to cluster about the neutrality point thus implying some measure of disapproval. Here, for the first time we see distinctive international differences in the ordering of responses.

(1) In all countries other teachers were the ones seen to be most in favor of corporal punishment.

(2) In the three British Commonwealth countries, educational officials are seen as taking the most disapproving stance.

(3) In the U.S.A. however, it is the parents who are seen to disapprove most.

(4) In all countries it is the other teachers who are most in favor of corporal punishment (presumably for the same reason that policemen are in favor of bearing arms).

The next item (Figure 6) is concerned with <u>confining attention during free periods to professional matters only</u> (e.g., not making conversation or reading novels in the teachers' lounge).

(1) Here again the teacher groups in all four countries stand firmly together. They disapprove of the item, no doubt because

either it implied a threat to their autonomy or a denigration of their sense of professional responsibility.

(2) The pattern for each country was identical. The other teachers (more frivolous) were seen to disapprove most, respondents were next, parents next, and THEY, i.e., principal and the administration were seen to disapprove least.

Item 31 (Figure 7) was concerned with <u>strict adherence to administratively provided curricula</u>.

(1) Here we find the younger countries, N.Z., Australia and the U.S.A. clustering together--they had very similar means--and, ordered the reference groups in the same way. Their administrators approved "adherence" most, parents next most, other teachers next most and the respondents, with a fine sense of rugged individualism, least of all.

(2) England violated this pattern in that in comparison with the other countries less approval was attributed to all significant others. Furthermore, parents were seen as most approving.

The next item (Figure 8) deals with <u>your avoidance of speaking out on controversial topics at public rallies or at other public meetings</u>.

(1) All countries ordered the significant others in the same way and placed themselves in the lowest, most disapproving position which was just a little left of the neutrality center.

(2) Australian education officials were seen as closest to approving the item--probably because the restriction is an official regulation in some states.

Figure 9 deals with Question 33: Your having an occasional drink at a local hotel or bar.

(1) The mean scores for all referenced sets are respectively England 3.51, New Zealand, 3.44, Australia, 3.36 and U.S.A. 2.87. Thus the Commonwealth countries tend towards approval and the U.S.A. tends toward disapproval.

(2) Except in England where the respondents apparently had the courage of their convictions, other teachers were seen to approve most with the respondents themselves next.

(3) In the three younger countries the parents were seen as disapproving most. In England it was the Principal.

The final figure (Figure 10) deals with emphasis on social advancement in your instruction (preparing pupils to get ahead in life).

(1) This is regarded as universally good--everyone is thought to approve.

(2) Parents are seen as approving most, in all countries.

(3) Interestingly enough in the three young countries it is the other teachers who are thought to approve least while in England, it is the respondents who do.

The data provide a basis for drawing some conclusions about the teachers social relationships. Respondents place themselves closer to parents than any other reference group on: (Table 3)

1. Attendance at P.T.A.
2. Non professional duties (all except England)
3. Orderliness and quiet (all except England)

And 5. Corporal punishment (in England only)

They place themselves closer to <u>other teachers</u> on:

6. Use of free periods (all countries)

7. Adherence to curricula (all countries)

8. Free speech (all countries)

9. Occasional drinks (all countries)

10. Emphasizing "social advancement" (all except U.S.A.)

And 2. Non professional duties (England only)

3. Orderliness and quiet (England only)

They place themselves closer to <u>Principals</u> on:

4. Broad goals (excluding U.S.A.)

5. Corporal punishment (excluding England)

And 10. Emphasis on social advancement (U.S.A. only)

Only one set of respondents places itself close to educational officials, viz.:

4. The Americans, on a broad range of goals

When the opposite perspective divergence, becomes the focus instead, respondents may be seen as being <u>furtherest away</u> from <u>parents</u> on:

4. Broad range of goals (all)

9. Occasional drinks (excluding England)

10. Social advancement (excluding U.S.A.)

U.S.A. only:

5. Corporal punishment

England only:

7. Adherence to curricula

They place themselves <u>furtherest away</u> from other <u>teachers</u> in the following way:

In Australia (once) on attendance at P.T.A.'s

In the U.S.A. (once) on orderliness and quiet

In N.Z. (thrice) on P.T.A.'s

and orderliness

and corporal punishment

In England never

They place themselves <u>furtherest away</u> from <u>Principals</u> thus:

In England (twice) on orderliness and quiet

and occasional drinks

In Australia (twice) on non professional duties

and orderliness and quiet

In N.Z. (once) on non professional duties

They place themselves <u>furtherest away</u> from <u>Educational Officials</u> thus:

1. P.T.A.'s (England and U.S.A.)
2. Non professional duties (England and U.S.A.)
5. Corporal punishment (England and Australia)
6. Use of free periods (all countries)
7. Adherence to curricula (all except England)
8. Free speech (all countries)

The congruency findings imply that there is solidarity among the teachers in all four countries on matters that effect their own autonomy. Respondents and <u>other teachers</u> are closest together in item 6, 7, 8, 9. They are also concerted in their belief in training pupils to get ahead. However, on that other philosophical question, support of a broad range of educational goals, they see themselves as more congruent with the principal.

On the other hand the respondents are more at one with <u>parents</u>, they think, on matters that relate to adjunctive aspects of the educational task, viz., P.T.A. attendance, non professional duties, orderliness and quiet.

They share affinity with the principal on the broad goal item (U.S. excluded) and corporal punishment (England excluded).

Finally, the U.S. respondents are the only ones to see themselves close to Educational Officials on anything, viz., the broad range of goals issue.

If we assume that the greater the degree of incongruence between respondents and significant others the greater the possibility of misunderstanding if not conflict, then it is obvious that to the respondents the greatest potential for disharmony lies with Educational Officials.

In the U.S.A. the affected items are (1,2,6,7,8) items that have non teaching, organizational administrational significance.

In England the items are (1,2,5,6,8) where corporal punishment replaces curricula adherence as the contentious issue.

Australia and New Zealand are almost identical. Both include items 6,7,8 but Australia adds 5 (corporal punishment) as well.

Respondent-principal divergence is never maximal in the U.S.A. It is maximal once in N.Z. on the non professional duties issue. It is maximal twice both in Australia (professional duties, orderliness and quiet) and in England (orderliness and occasional drinks).

Greater divergence is exhibited between parents and respondents universally on item 4 (broad goals) and, excepting England, on item 9. (occasional drink) and, excluding U.S.A., item 10. (social advancement) Additionally in England, curricula adherence is a contentious issue and in the U.S.A. corporal punishment is.

Finally English respondents never register maximum divergence from their fellow teachers, Australians do once (P.T.A. meetings), Americans

do twice (orderliness and social advancement) and New Zealanders three times (P.T.A. meetings, orderliness and quiet, corporal punishment).

As a final comment, three points are worth making. First, there was a remarkable degree of similarity reflected in the data. There were only four occasions in the convergence scores when one country stood apart from the others. England did so three times and the U.S.A. once. There were five instances in the divergence scores (England & U.S.A., twice, N.Z. once). However, there were also seven cases of pairs. These saw England and the U.S.A. grouped together twice, England & Australia twice, Australia & N.Z. twice and N.Z. and the U.S.A. once. Second, the spread of mean responses along the approve-disapprove continuum was not great--no item spread more than 1.67 scale points and in fact, only half the scale was used. Third, we have no basis for attributing cause to any of the phenomenon described. Whether the differences within a country are associated with any other variable is yet to be determined. Furthermore, whether any feature of the responses was due to national differences or not is, as yet, only a matter for conjecture.

TABLE 1

TEACHER ROLE ACTIVITIES

1. REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT P.T.A. MEETINGS. (Q.25)
2. WILLING ACCEPTANCE OF NON-PROFESSIONAL DUTIES. (Q.26)
3. CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINING ORDERLINESS AND QUIET IN YOUR CLASSROOM. (Q.27)
4. EMPHASIS ON A BROAD RANGE OF GOALS IN YOUR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION. (Q.28)
5. USAGE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT FOR THE CONTROL OF DIFFICULT PUPILS. (Q.29)
6. CONFINING ACTIVITY DURING FREE PERIODS TO PROFESSIONAL MATTERS ONLY. (Q.30)
7. STRICT ADHERENCE TO ADMINISTRATIVELY PROVIDED CURRICULAR PLANS IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION. (Q.31)
8. AVOIDANCE OF SPEAKING OUT ON CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS AT POLITICAL RALLIES OR OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS. (Q.32)
9. HAVING AN OCCASIONAL DRINK AT A LOCAL HOTEL OR BAR. (Q.33)
10. EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT IN INSTRUCTION. (Q.34)

ITEMS	TEACHER ACTIVITY	LEVEL OF APPROVAL	I approve of		School officials approve of (a)		Principals (HM's) approve of (b)		Other teachers approve of (c)		Parents of pupils approve of (d)	
25.	Your regular attendance at meetings of PTA (P&C).	Strongly approve Approve Feel neutral about Disapprove Strongly disapprove										

Table 2

Questionnaire Format

Table 3

Respondent - Significant Other, Role Convergence

	Significant Others			
Q	Other Teachers	Parents	Principals	Ed. Off.
1		E, A, NZ, US		
2	E	A, NZ, US		
3	E	A, NZ, US		
4			E, A, NZ,	US
5		E	A, NZ, US	
6	E, A, NZ, US			
7	E, A, NZ, US			
8	E, A, NZ, US			
9	E, A, NZ, US			
10	E, A, NZ,		US	

Table 4

Respondent - Significant Other, Role Divergence

	Significant Others			
Q	Other Teachers	Parents	Principals	Ed. Off.
1	A, NZ			E, US
2			A, NZ	E, US
3	NZ, US		E, A,	
4		E, A, NZ, US		
5	NZ	US		E, A,
6				E, A, NZ, US
7		E		A, NZ, US
8				E, A, NZ, US
9		A, NZ, US	E	
10	US	E, A, NZ		

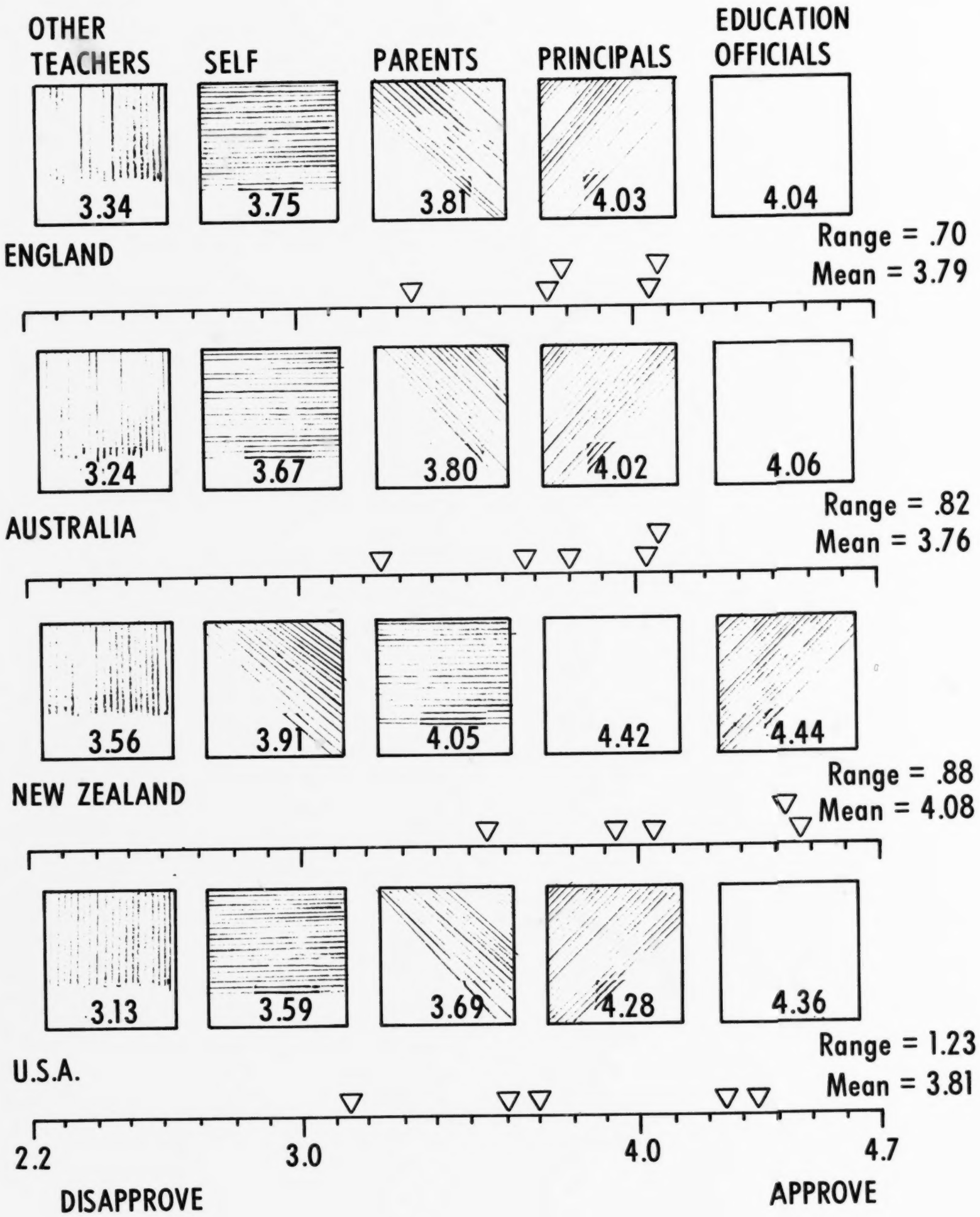

Figure 1 (25) YOUR REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF PTA

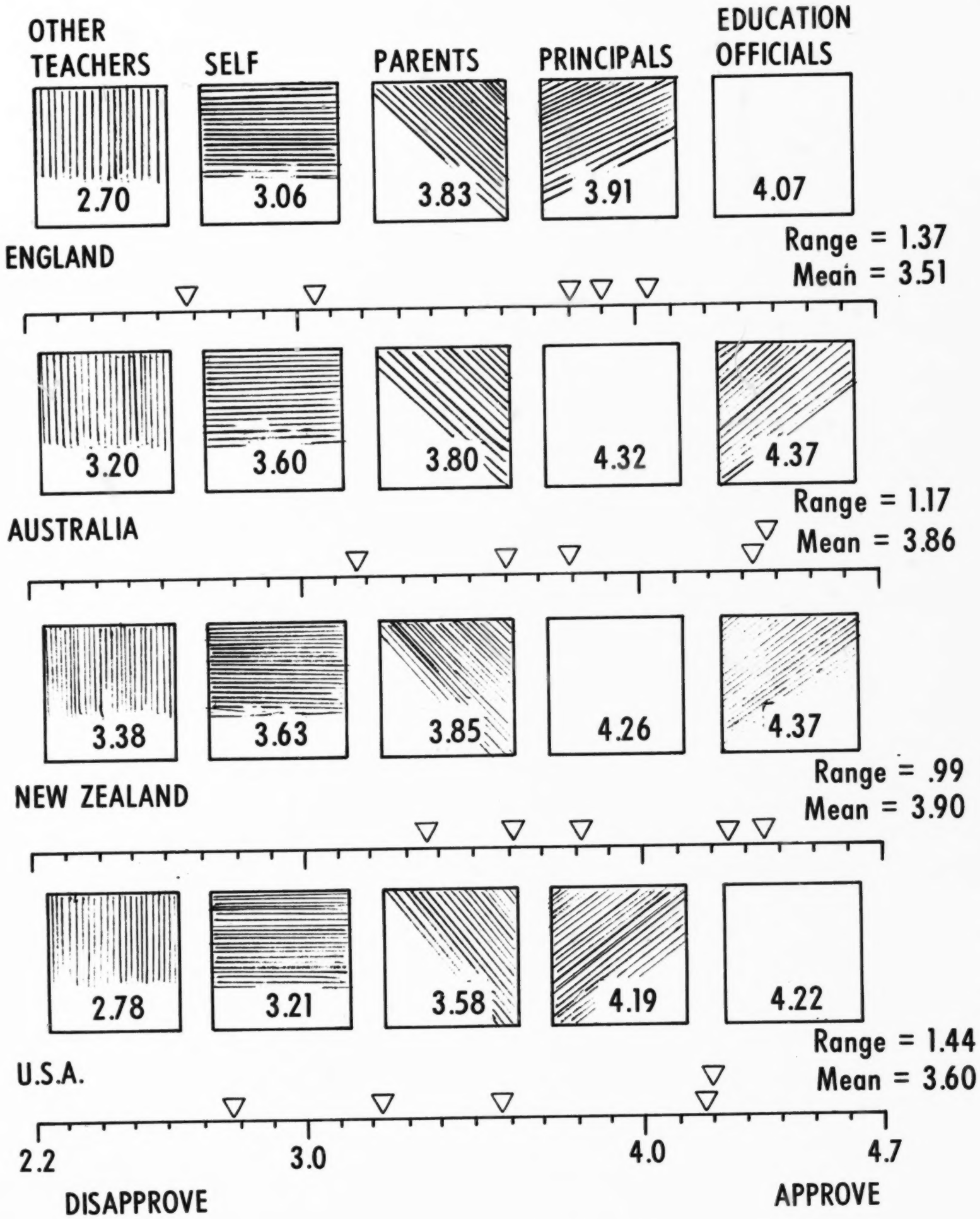

Figure 2 (Q. 26) YOUR WILLING ACCEPTANCE OF NON-PROFESSIONAL DUTIES (E.G., LUNCHROOM RESPONSIBILITY, SUPERVISOR OF CLUBS, ETC.)

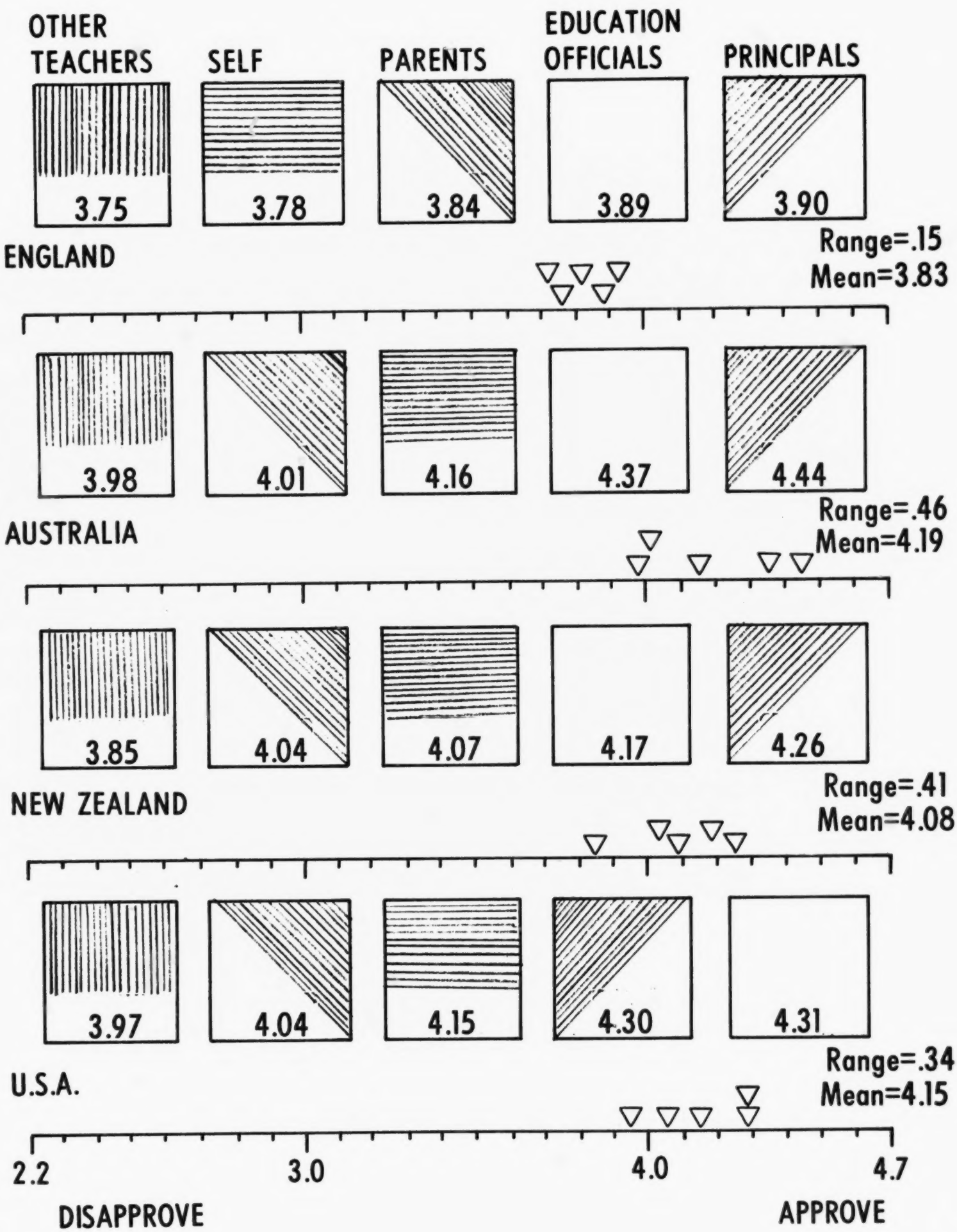

Figure 3 (Q. 27) CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINING ORDERLINESS AND QUIET IN YOUR CLASSROOM

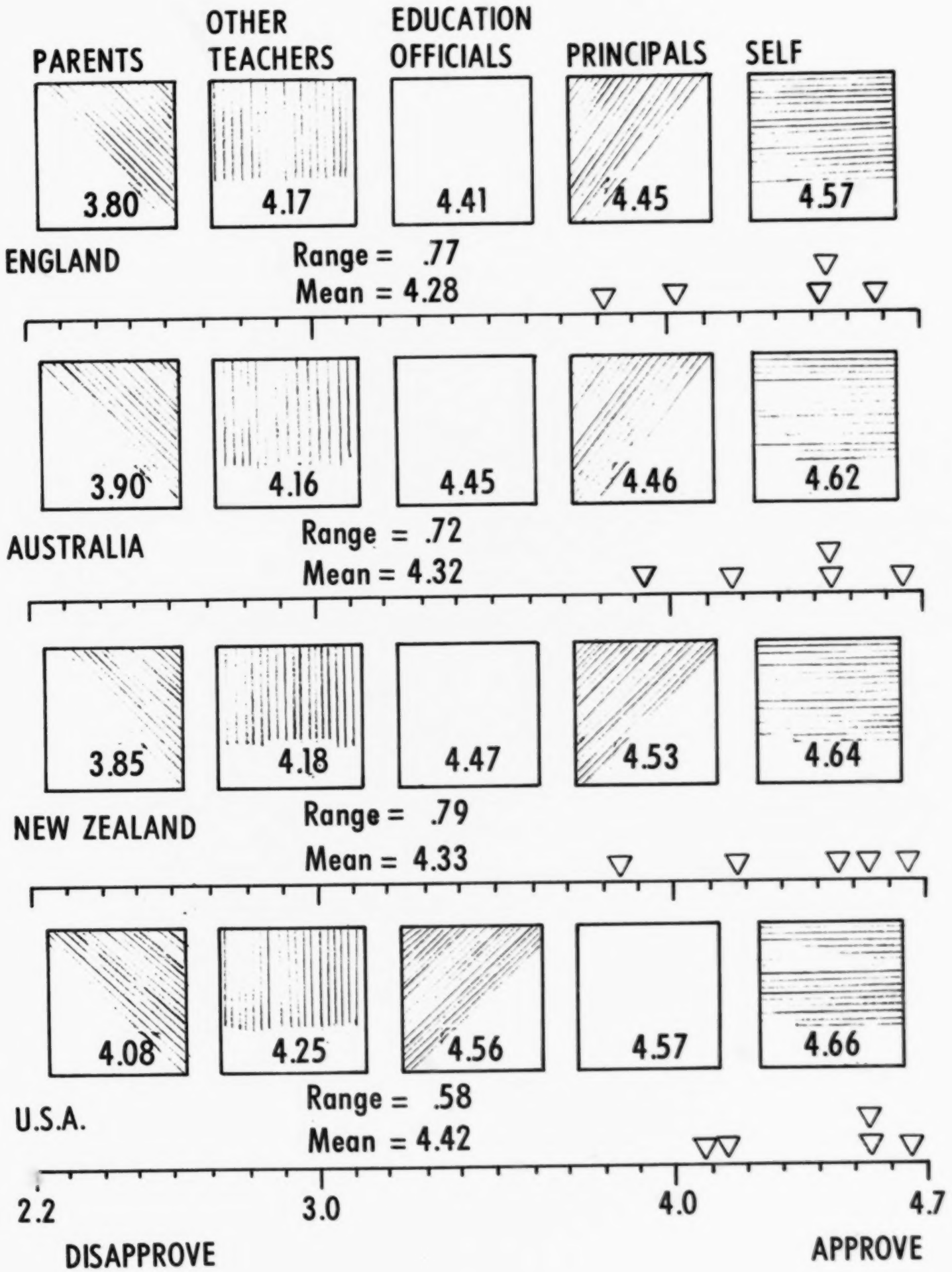

Figure 4 (Q. 28) EMPHASIS ON A BROAD RANGE OF GOALS IN YOUR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION (I.E., TEACHING THE WHOLE CHILD)

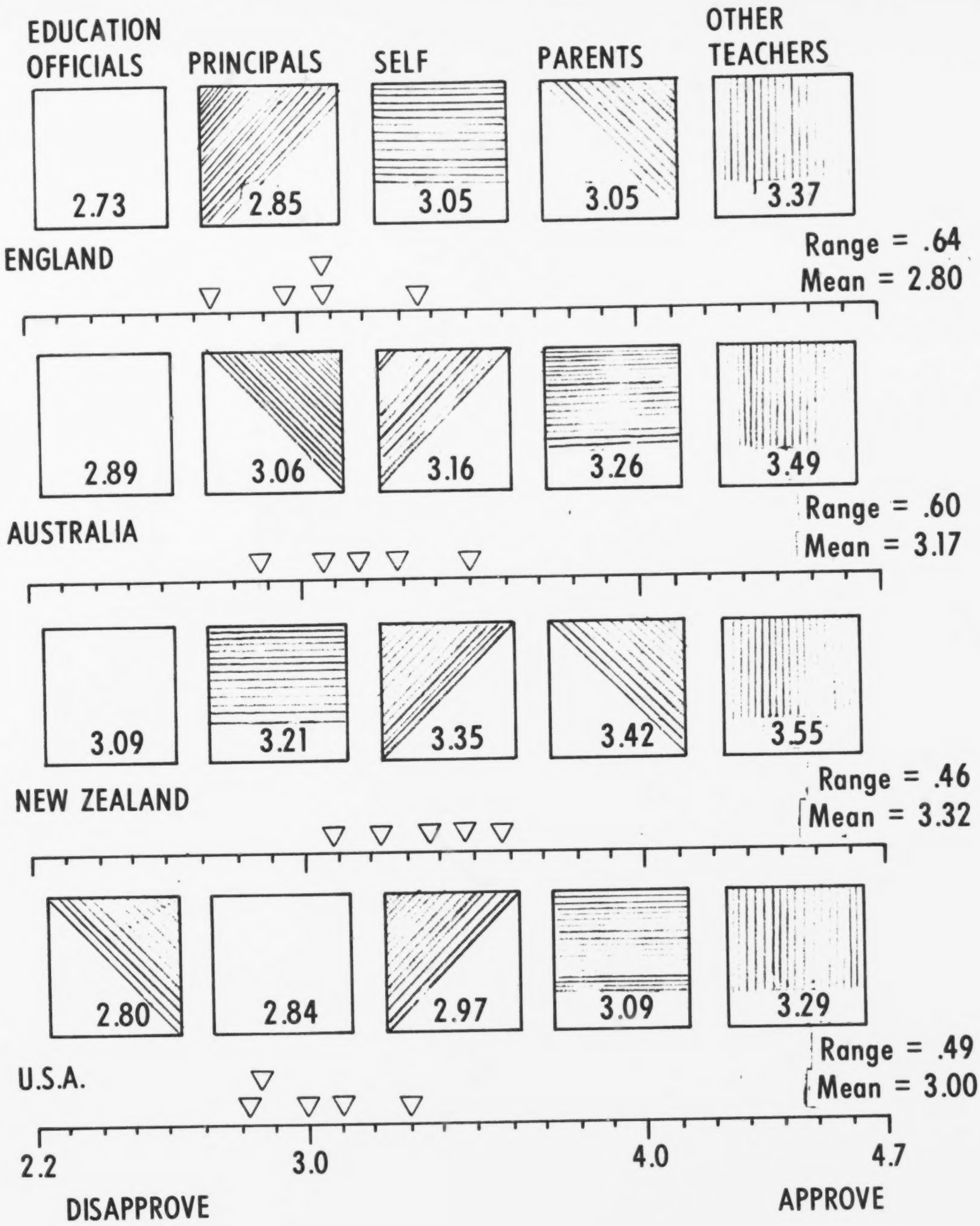

Figure 5 (Q.29) YOUR USAGE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT FOR THE CONTROL OF DIFFICULT PUPILS

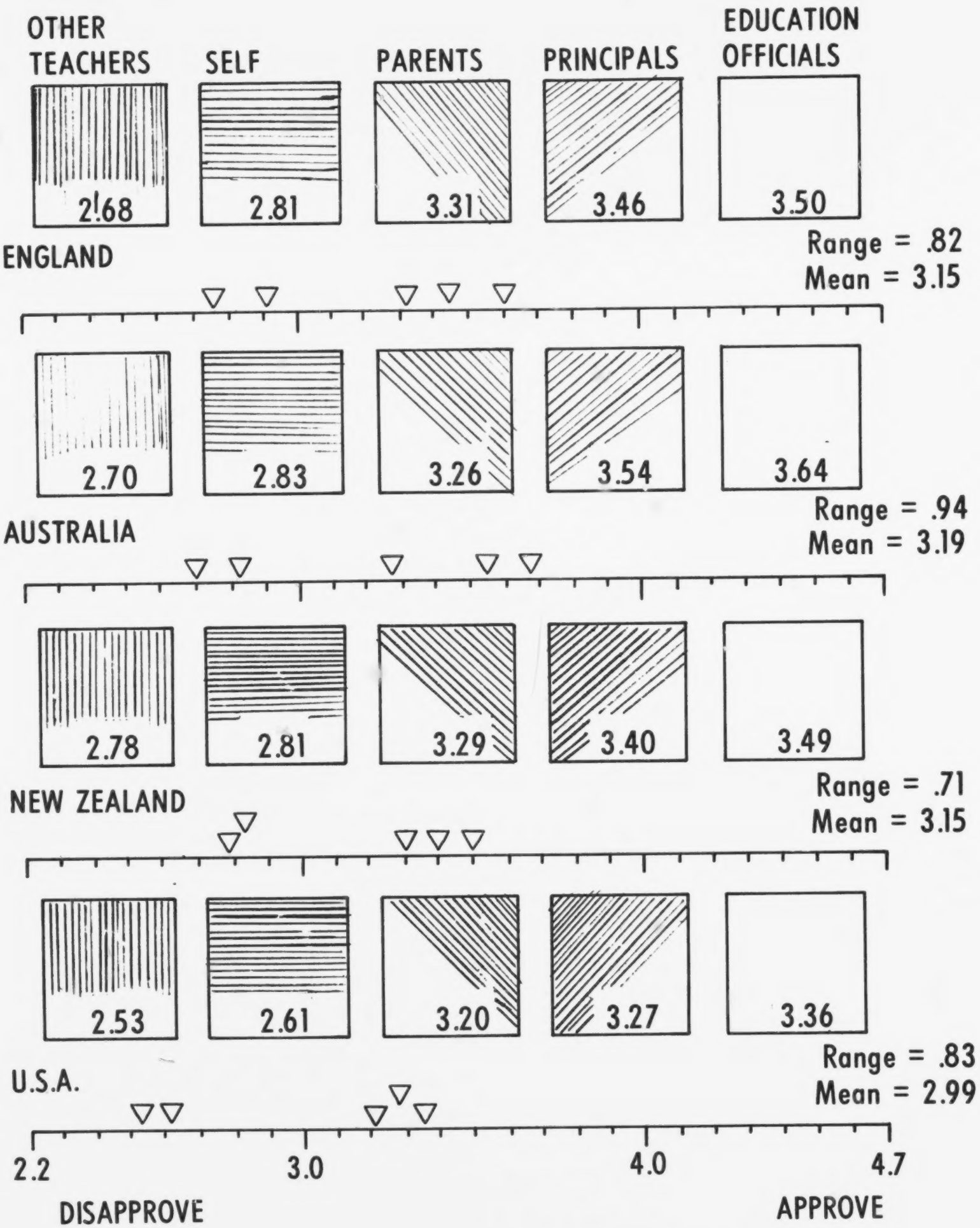

Figure 6 (Q. 30) CONFINING YOUR ACTIVITY DURING FREE PERIODS TO PROFESSIONAL MATTERS ONLY (E.G., NOT MAKING CONVERSATION OR READING NOVELS IN THE TEACHER'S LOUNGE)

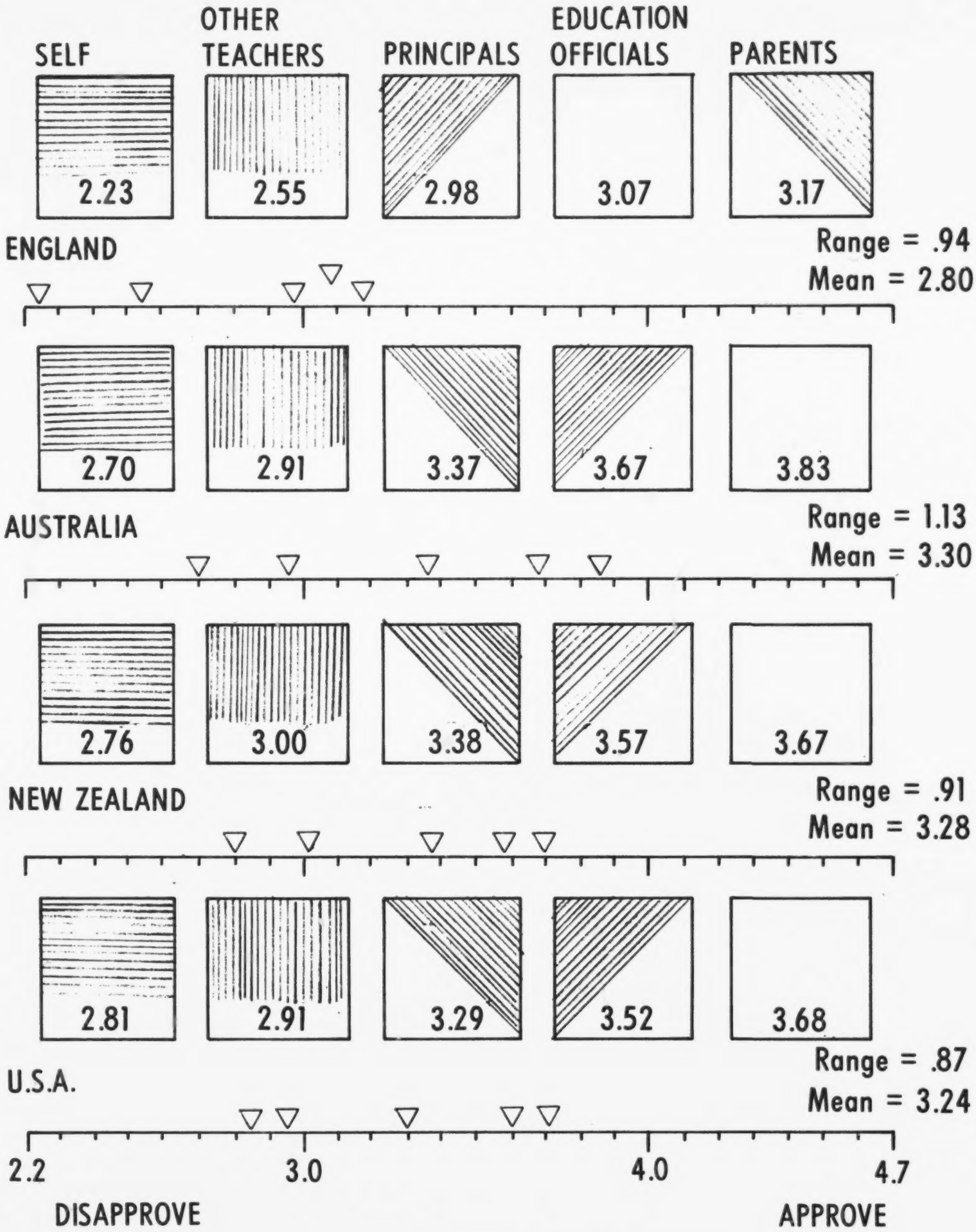

Figure 7 (Q. 31) STRICT ADHERENCE TO ADMINSTRATIVELY PROVIDED CURRICULAR PLANS IN YOUR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

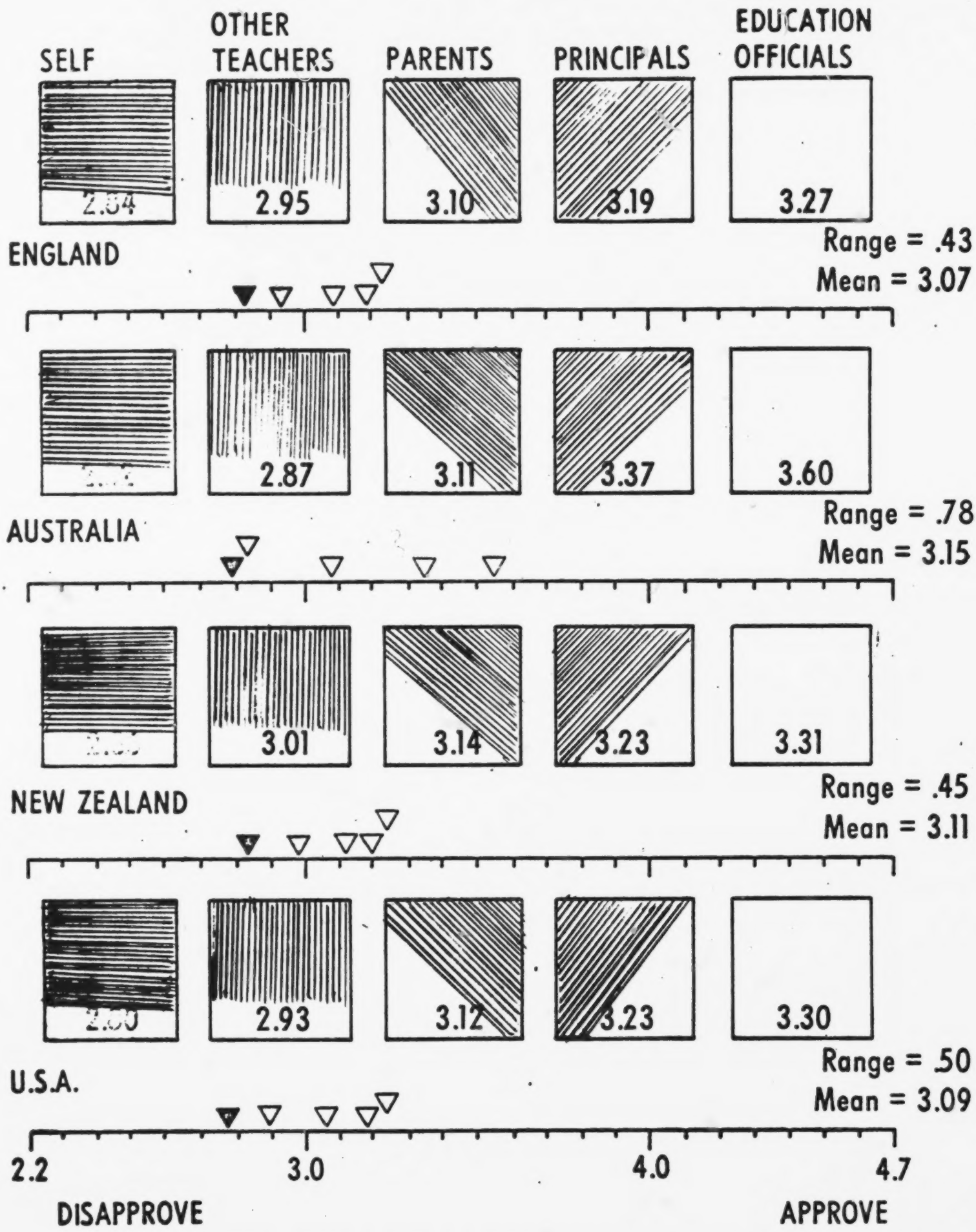

Figure 8 (Q. 32) YOUR AVOIDANCE OF SPEAKING OUT ON CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS AT POLITICAL RALLIES OR AT OTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS

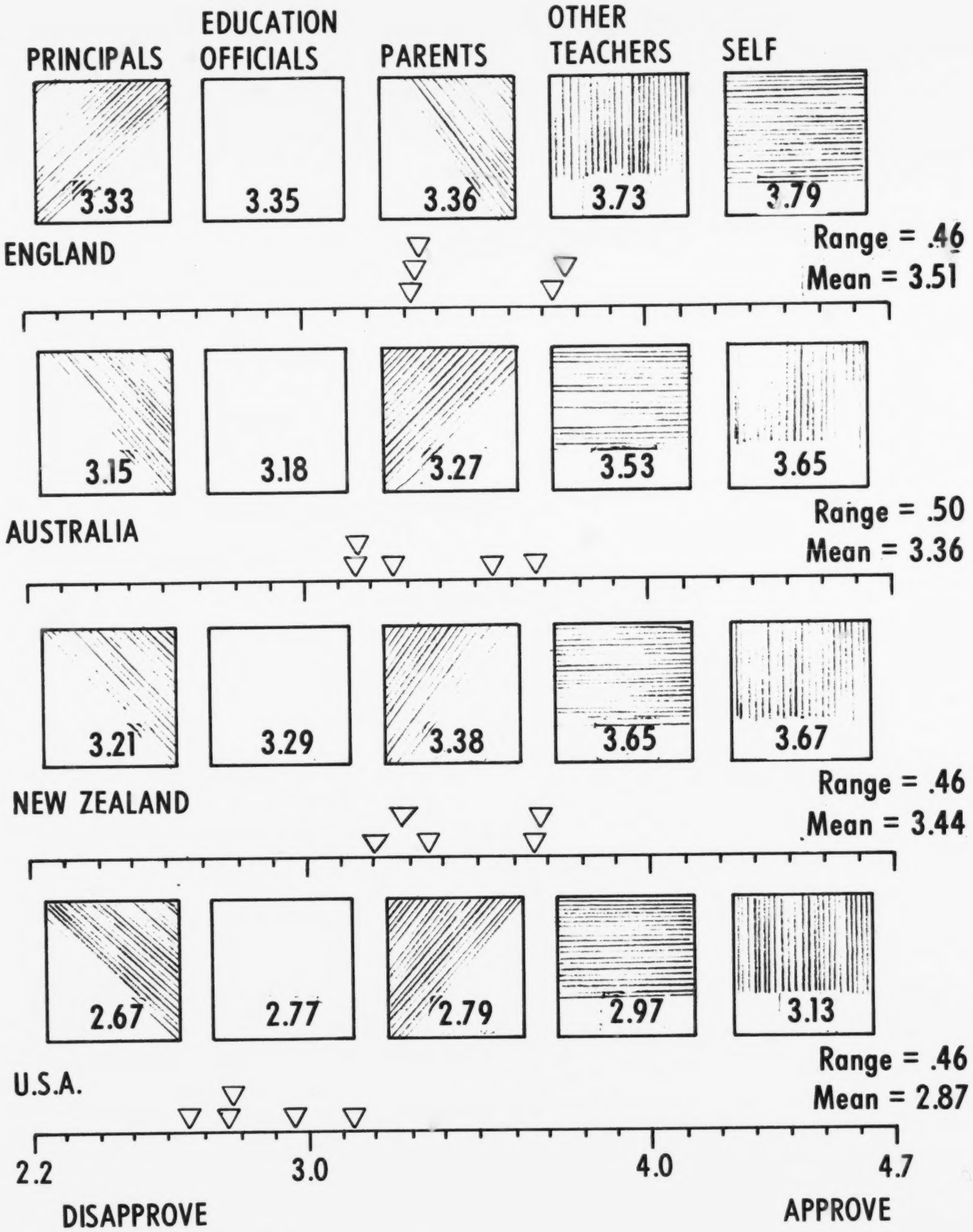

Figure 9 (Q. 33) YOUR HAVING AN OCCASIONAL DRINK AT A LOCAL HOTEL OR BAR

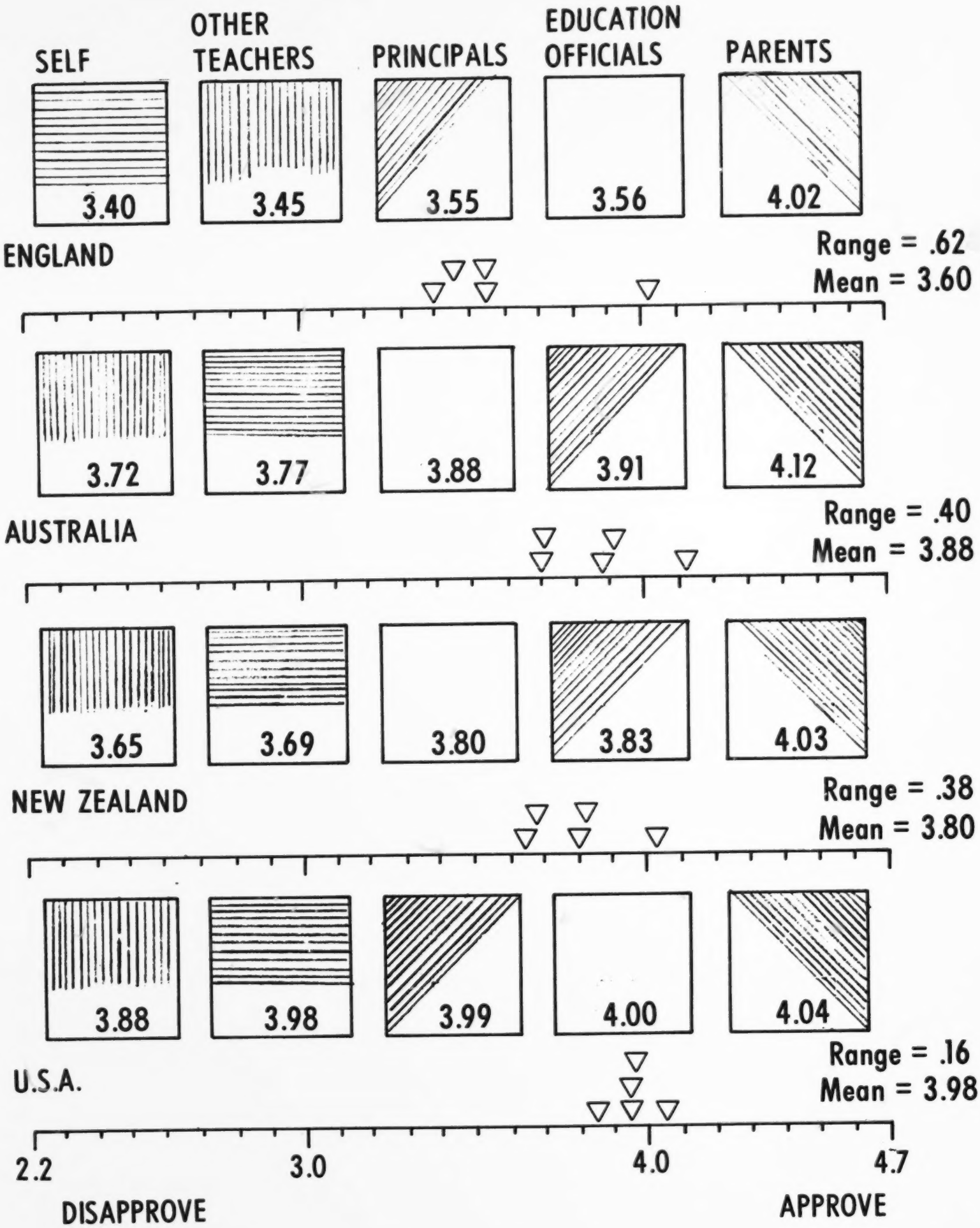

Figure 10 (Q. 34) EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT IN YOUR INSTRUCTION (PREPARING PUPILS TO "GET AHEAD IN LIFE")